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June 23, 2021

Law School News

Nava Wins Inaugural Judicial Fellowship

Rising 2L Marianna Nava is among the first four law students nationwide chosen to become Federal Magistrate Judges Association Fellows

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Michael M. Bowden



Marianna Nava, a rising second-year law student at Roger Williams University School of Law, has been selected to receive a Federal Magistrate Judges Association (FMJA) Fellowship in the program's inaugural year.

“For the first time, four law students of diverse backgrounds have been named as FMJA Fellows,” said FMJA President and Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Deborah Smith. Beginning this month, she added, Ms. Nava will intern with Magistrate Judge Judith Dein of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts in Boston. She will also receive a \$2,500 stipend.

“We could not be more proud of Marianna,” said RWU Law Dean Gregory W. Bowman. “Her excellence and determination – and her desire to succeed by helping her community – is inspiring, and aligns well with the values of both the FMJA and RWU Law.”

Ms. Nava, of Fall River, Mass., was born in Brazil and immigrated to the United States at age 13. She said the honor spoke strongly to her personal experiences and professional goals.

“As an immigrant, I overcame many of the socioeconomic challenges that diverse populations often face when moving to a different country,” Nava said. “That experience has allowed me to appreciate the importance of diversity in the legal profession. Upon graduating from RWU Law, I hope to one day give back to my community as a family law and immigration attorney.”

The FMJA Fellowship, Nava said, will help her realize that goal. “I care deeply about immigrant communities and hope to help with legal matters that threaten their families, homes, and careers,” she explained. “I am beyond excited to learn more about the broad duties of federal judges and I hope to make a positive contribution to the judiciary this summer.”

The FMJA created the fellowship program this year, in partnership with Just the Beginning (JTB), a pipeline organization. The program’s stated purpose is “to support and promote the placement of diverse and traditionally underrepresented law students in judicial internships with U.S. Magistrate Judges.”

“Each Fellow will also have the opportunity to participate in FMJA programs advising students about the application process for federal clerkships and the various career pathways to the bench,” Judge Smith noted. “Both the FMJA and the JTB are working to help establish a legal profession in which lawyers and judges reflect the people they serve.”

Ralph E. Tavares, Jr., RWU Law Director Diversity and Outreach, called their choice of Nava “absolutely phenomenal.”

“I applaud the FMJA for their commitment to diversifying the bench,” he said. “And JTB is an incredible program that has provided impactful opportunities to change the lens through which law is viewed and administered. Representation matters, and I couldn’t be prouder that Marianna was selected as an inaugural recipient of this fellowship. I’m excited for her success, and I can’t wait to hear more about her experiences in this program. RWU Law is so incredibly proud of her!”

The other three FMJA Fellows are Monroe Thorton of Cumberland School of Law; Devin Weber of Seton Hall University School of Law; and Ellen Wiah of the University of Iowa College of Law.